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KNUCKLES™ THE ECHIDNA

DIRECT EDITION

KNUCKLES™

BOOK TWENTY-SIX
THE FIRST DATE
PART ONE OF THREE

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BORN TO THE MOST NOBLE OF ECHIDNA HOUSES, THE LATEST TO CONTINUE THE FAMILY HERITAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY AS GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND, DEFENDER OF ALL AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL FROM THE WORLD BEYOND AS WELL AS THOSE WHO WOULD THREATEN FROM WITHIN!

ARCHIE COMICS AND SEGA PRESENT... KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA!

COME THE SPRINGTIME, WHEN FLOWERS BLOOM, BIRDS CHIRP AND BEES PRODUCE HONEY, WE FIND ONLY TWO TYPES OF CREATURES: THOSE IN LOVE AND THOSE WHO WISH TO THEY WERE IN LOVE. AND FOR THOSE NOT ENGAGED IN THE MORE PLEASURABLE PURSUITS, WE FIND THEM GATHERING TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE MEANING OF LIFE AND ALL IT HAS TO OFFER IN ALL ITS VARIOUS AND ENDLESS PERMUTATIONS...

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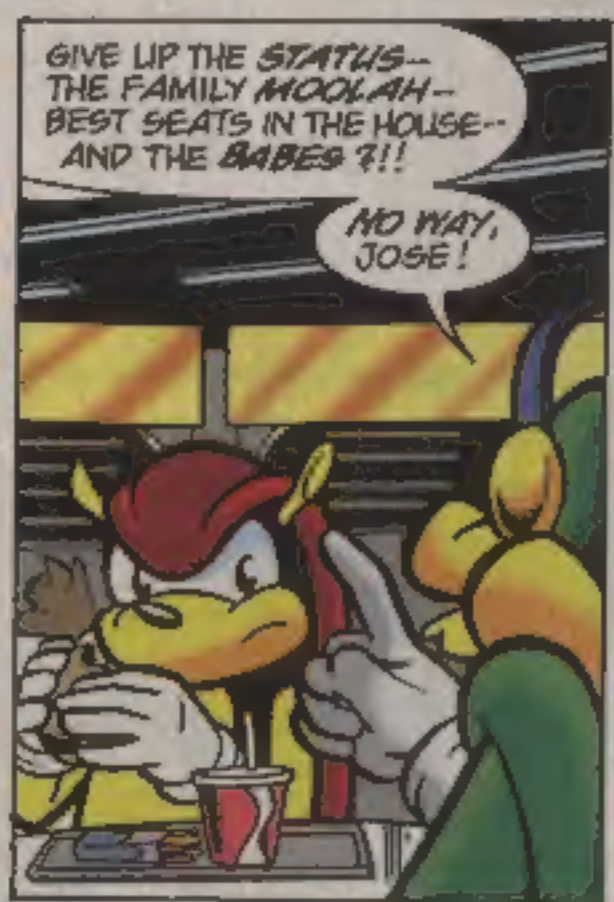
HARD TO BELIEVE THE CHARMSMAN IS STILL GONE!

I FIGURED HE'D COME ROUND WAAAY BEFORE THIS!

TIMES HAVE CHANGED, VECTOR!

CHARMY GREW UP!

IT'S NOT LIKE HE HAD A CHOICE, ESPY!



WHERE DID YOU HEAR THIS?

YOU HOLDING OUT ON US?

C'MON, ESPY!

GIVE IT TO US STRAIGHT!

ALL RIGHT ALREADY! I RECEIVED A LETTER ANNOUNCING CHARMY'S ENGAGEMENT TO A GIRL NAMED SAFRON!

ENGAGED? AS IN--

Y'MEAN-- Y'MEAN--

I THINK I'LL HURL!

RELAX, VECTOR!

BESIDES, DIDN'T YOU JUST LIST "BABES" AS A REASON NOT TO GIVE UP HIS CROWN?

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT MARRIAGE!

C'MON, VECTOR!

IT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE EVENTUALLY!

CHICKS, MAN--

--NOTHIN' BUT BAAAAD NEWS!

LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE, VECTOR!

WHAT GIRL WOULD WANT YOU ANYWAY?

Y'GOT THAT BACKWARDS, MIGHTY MAN--

--WHAT GIRL COULD HANDLE ME?

OH, I COULD THINK OF AT LEAST ONE!

WHO? THE WITCH?!

IN YOUR DREAMS!

JULIE-SU WOULD BE MORE THAN YOUR MATCH!

NO KIDDING!

ONLY--

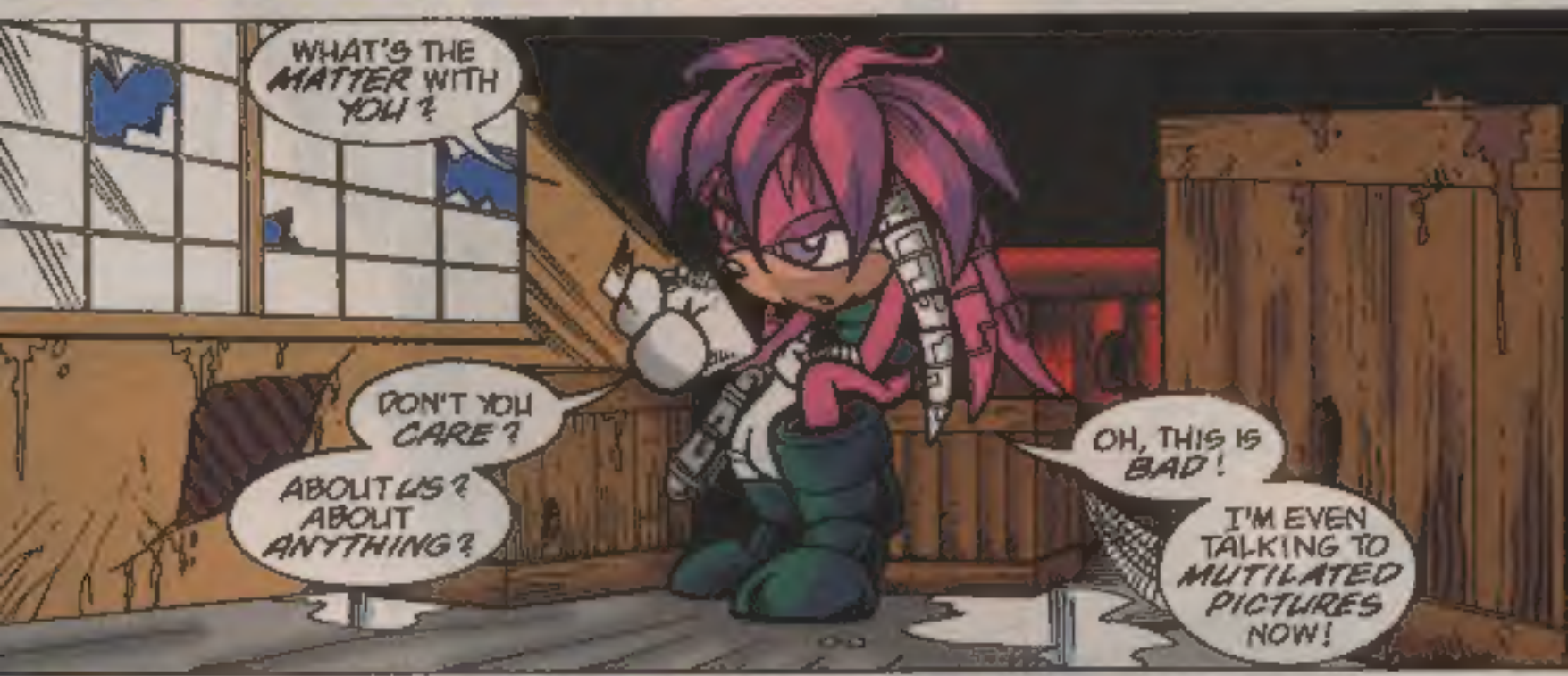
"-- SHE'S GOT HER SIGHTS AIMED AT KNUCKLES!"
RUN OUT ON ME, WILLYA!!!!*
BIIIIG MISTAKE!!!

SHE LOVES YOU...

(and you know that can't be bad!)

* JULIE-SU IS REFERRING TO THE ABRUPT WAY KNUCKLES LEFT HER AT THE BEGINNING OF LAST ISSUE -- JUSTIN.

BLAM!


WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
DON'T YOU CARE?
ABOUT US? ABOUT ANYTHING?
OH, THIS IS BAD!
I'M EVEN TALKING TO MUTILATED PICTURES NOW!

I NEED A LIFE!
THE PROBLEM IS--
--WHERE DO YOU GET ONE--
5

--WHEN ALL YOU THINK ABOUT IS HIM?
I HATE YOU, KNUCKLES--

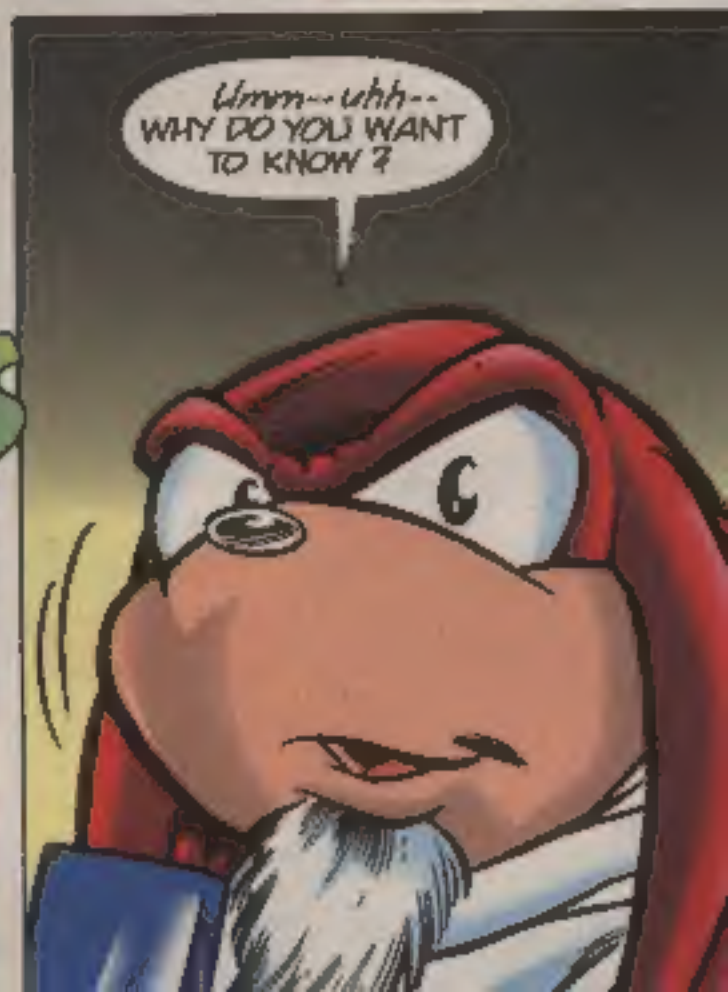
"--FOR NOT BEING HERE TO TALK WITH ME RIGHT NOW!"

WELL, WELL, WELL! LOOK WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN!

HERE! HAVE SOME BREAKFAST!

THANKS! I'M STARVING!

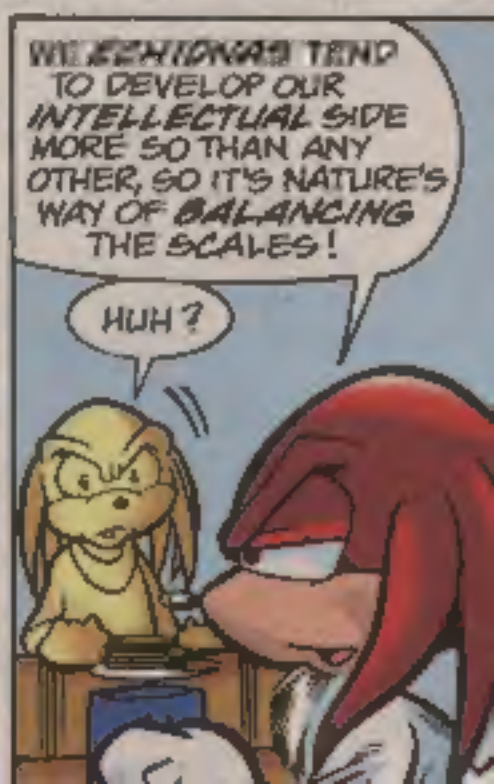
PAN CAKES



IT'S JULIE-SU, DAD!

I FEEL *WEIRD* WHENEVER I'M WITH *HER*!

WEIRD?



NATURE HAS PROVIDED A MEANS FOR US TO RECOGNIZE OUR *LIFE PARTNER* FROM THE OPPOSITE SEX.

THAT MEANS BOTH THE BOY AND THE GIRL ARE *COMPATIBLE*, RIGHT?

IT *USUALLY* WORKS THAT WAY, YES!

THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO *YOU* AND *MOM*?

GOOD QUESTION!

I'VE OFTEN *WONDERED* THAT ONE MYSELF!

I GUESS EVEN THE *BEST* OF RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRE A LOT OF *WORK*!

I GET ALONG *GREAT* WITH THE *GUYS*!

IT'S *JULIE-SU* I HAVE MY *PROBLEMS* WITH!

WOULDN'T IT BE *EASIER*--

--IF GUYS HUNG AROUND WITH *GUYS* AND GIRLS STUCK TO *THEMSELVES*?

PROBABLY, BUT EVENTUALLY THEY WOULD WANT SOMETHING *MORE*!

MORE?

WHY DON'T WE FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS FOR JULIE-SU *BEFORE* DISCUSSING ANYTHING MORE?

" I SUPPOSE, BUT WHAT MORE COULD THERE BE ?"
Y'KNOW, VECTOR, I THINK YOU'RE ALL MOUTH WHEN IT COMES TO GIRLS!
SEZ YOU!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TALKS ABOUT THEM ALL THE TIME!
THIS CROC DOES MORE THAN JUST TALK!
ALL RIGHT, MISTER BIG MOUTH--
LET'S PUT UP OR SHUT UP!
WADDYA RAPPIN' ABOUT?
YOU SAY YOU'RE HOT STUFF -
-- SO LET'S SEE YOU ASK OUT A GIRL-- ANY GIRL WITHIN EYESIGHT-- TO GO OUT ON A DATE WITH YOU!
HUH?
YOU HEARD ME!
OR ARE YOU REALLY JUST ANOTHER--
WAIT HERE!
WATCH AND LEARN FROM THE MAN!

--AND BARRIE IS THROWING THIS WAY-OUT *PARTY* THIS COMING *SATURDAY*! WANNA COME?

I'D *LOVE* TO! WHERE'S IT GOING TO BE?

AT BARRIE'S *PAD* ACROSS FROM THE *COMMONS*!

SAY HEY! THEY WERE BOTH *HOT*!

WITHOUT A *PARTNER* FOR THE OTHER, EITHER IS A *NO GO*, THOUGH!

DEFINITELY *NOT* FOR THIS BOY!

Hmmm...

BABY HAS *POTENTIAL*!

OH, YEAH!

ONE HOT MAMA!!

SAY, BABE--

DOING ANYTHING THIS WEEKEND?

I'M STUDYING TO BECOME A *MISSIONARY*!

HOW ABOUT GOING OUT THE *FOLLOWING* WEEKEND *INSTEAD*?

"YOU'LL BE THE ONE MISSING OUT, BABE!"

YEEUCHH!

I'M DEFINITELY HAVING A BAD HAIR DAY!

THAT'S IT!

I HAVE TO GET OUT!

I'M STARTING TO SOUND AS SHALLOW AS SOME OF THE DITZES I RUN INTO.

PERHAPS A SELF-IMPROVEMENT COURSE WOULD HELP!

IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO IMPROVE!

MAYBE I'M JUST NOT HAVING ENOUGH FUN IN MY LIFE!

EVERYTHING HAS BEEN A SERIOUS MATTER AS FAR AS I CAN RECALL!

WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT ON?

HUH?

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I SAID IT'D BE A LOT *EASIER* TO TRY IT ON IF YOU WENT *INSIDE*!

DON'T YOU *THINK*?

I DON'T KNOW! I MEAN--

CAN'T *DECIDE* WHAT YOU WANT?

WE AT *FOOFI'S* ARE HERE TO *SERVE*!

THE *LADY* WAS INTERESTED IN TRYING ON THAT *FINE HAT* YOU HAVE ON DISPLAY IN THE WINDOW!

AN *EXQUISITE* CHOICE! IT'S ONE OF OUR *FINEST*!

AND IT'S *SO YOU*!

DO YOU *REALLY* THINK SO?

I FEEL SO-- *SILLY*!

NONSENSE! IT GIVES YOU A SENSE OF *STYLE*!

NOW, IF YOU'VE *NOTHING* MORE *IMPORTANT* TO DO--

"—WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME FOR *LUNCH*?"

TAP... TAP... TAP...

ARGHY!

BAMF!

AH, THERE YOU ARE!

I WANTED TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING, LAD!

SINCE YOUR FATHER IS PERFORMING HIS *MORNING ROUTINE*, I THOUGHT *NOW* WOULD BE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY!

THAT'S JUST IT! I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M DOING!

ON THE ONE HAND, I'M *HAPPY* TO BE WITH *DAD*!

ON THE OTHER, I KEEP THINKING OF *JULIE-SU*!

IN *LOVE*, ARE WE?

MY BOY, THERE ARE *NO* SUCH THINGS AS *EASY* ANSWERS!

HAVE YOU *DISCUSSED* THIS WITH *LOCKE*?

YEAH, BUT I DON'T THINK HE WAS TOO *THRILLED* ABOUT IT!

THAT'S ONLY *NATURAL*!

WHAT PARENT *ENJOYS* TALKING ABOUT MATTERS THAT DEAL WITH *GROWING UP*?

HEY! EVERYBODY!

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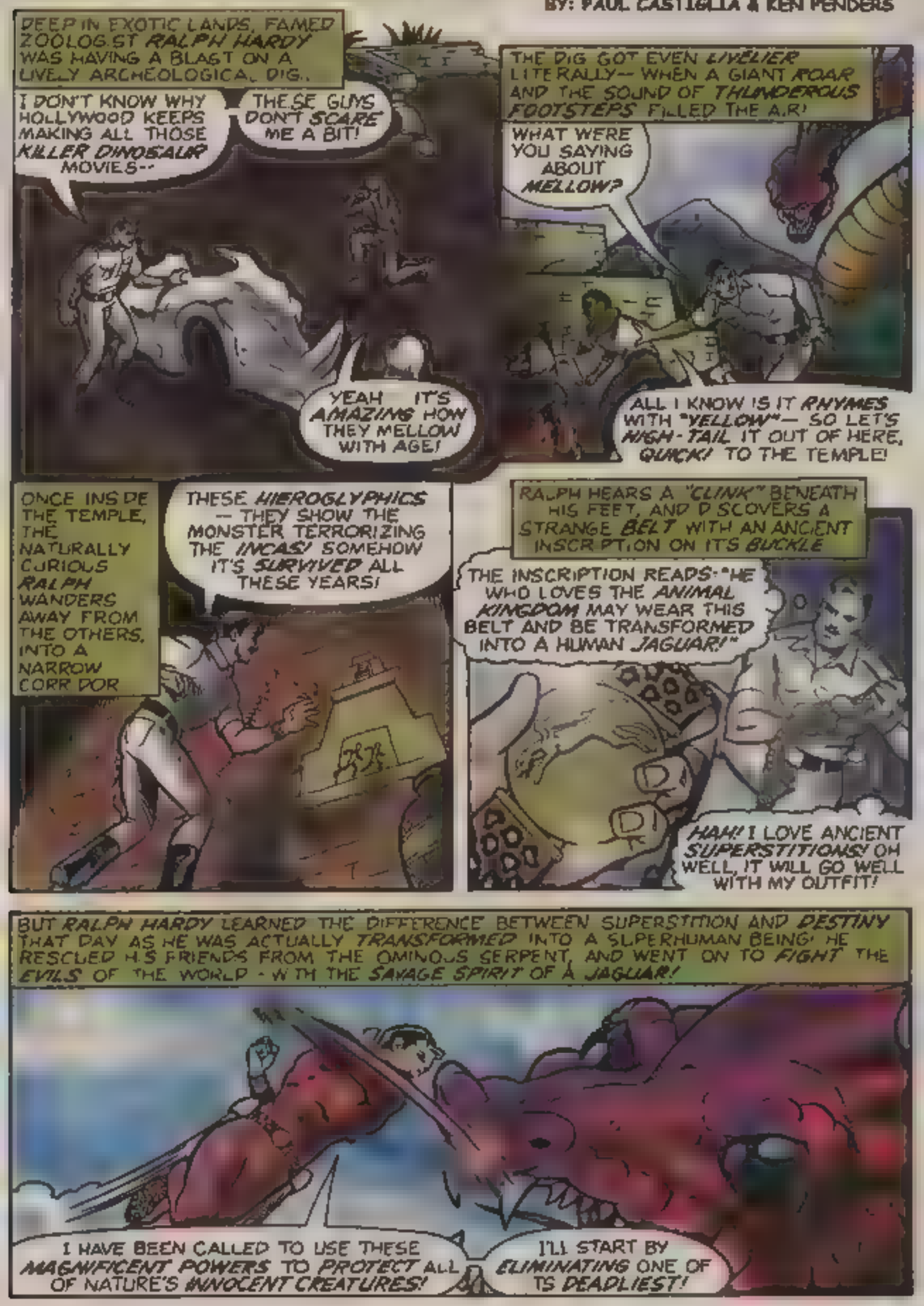
KNOW YOUR HEROES! "THE ORIGIN OF THE JAGUAR"

BY: PAUL CASTIGLIA & KEN PENDERS



PARENTS PREFER THEIR CHILDREN TO STAY CHILDREN SO THEY CAN PROTECT THEM FROM LIFE'S HARSH REALITIES!

AND LOVE CAN BE ONE OF THE HARSHEST TO DEAL WITH!

SO WHAT DO I DO?

MY BOY, IF YOU RECOGNIZE EVERYTHING IN LIFE HAS CONSEQUENCES AND ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THEM -

--YOU MAKE CHOICES AND LIVE WITH THEM!

HERE'S HOPING I CAN EXPLAIN THIS ONE TO MY DAD LATER!

LET'S GO!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, KNUCKLES--

--YOUR FATHER WAS YOUNG ONCE AS WELL

KNUCKLES?

" NOW WHERE DID THAT BOY MAKE OFF TO ? "
THIS IS NOT COOL!
IF I DON'T SCORE I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT FROM ESPY!
FOOD
HUH ?
I WAS ASKING IF YOU WANTED ANYTHING!
DEPENDS WHAT'S ON THE MENU!
THE SPECIAL OF THE DAY IS MILKWEED TOFU!
IF YOU CAN'T MAKE UP YOUR MIND, GET BACK TO ME AFTER YOU FIGURE IT OUT!
SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN!
OH, YEAH--
15

"--WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR DESSERT?"

BISTRO

SO TELL ME, JULIE-SU, IS THERE ANYONE SPECIAL IN YOUR LIFE AT THE MOMENT?

THAT'S A TOUGH ONE, RAYNOR!

I WISH I KNEW!

TALK ABOUT POOR TIMING, TO BE CONTINUED!

MIGHTY THE ARMADILLO

#78

Friend In Need

WHAT BEGINS AS A ROUTINE DAY ABRUPTLY CHANGES UPON THE ARRIVAL OF A VISITOR AT MIGHTY'S DEN, LOCATED AT ROCKY HILL ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE FLOATING ISLAND..

BOY, DOES THIS EVER BRING BACK MEMORIES!

I THOUGHT IT WOULD--THAT'S WHY I SOUGHT YOU OUT!

SO WHAT DO YOU NEED ME FOR IF YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?

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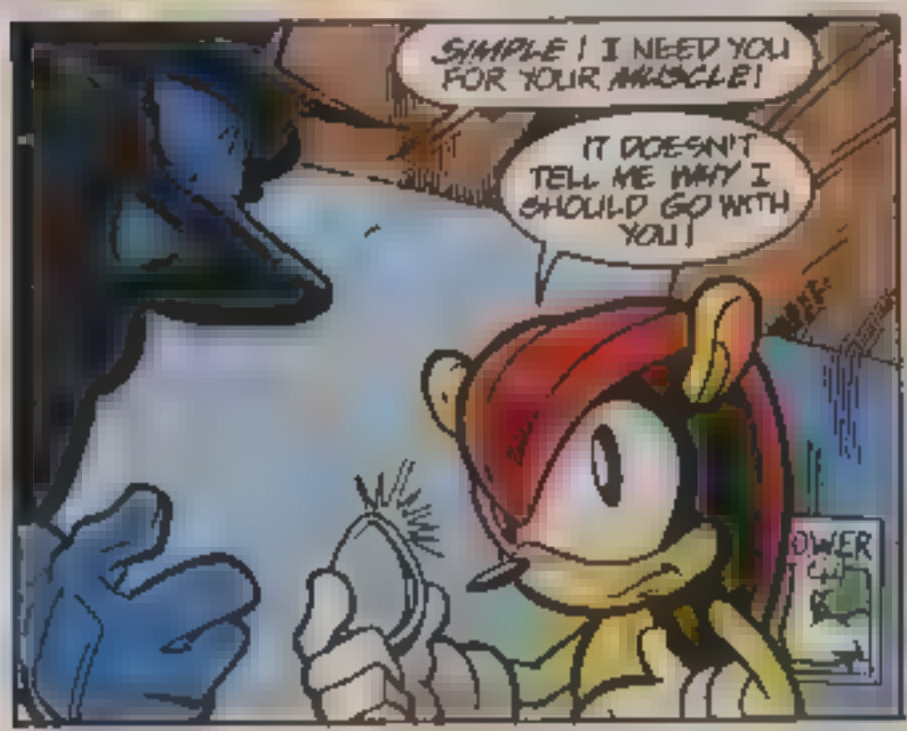
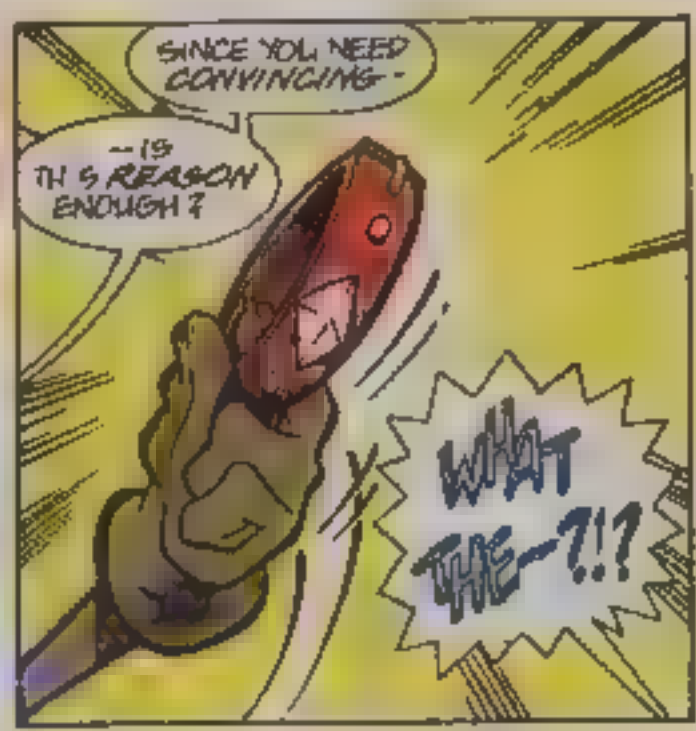
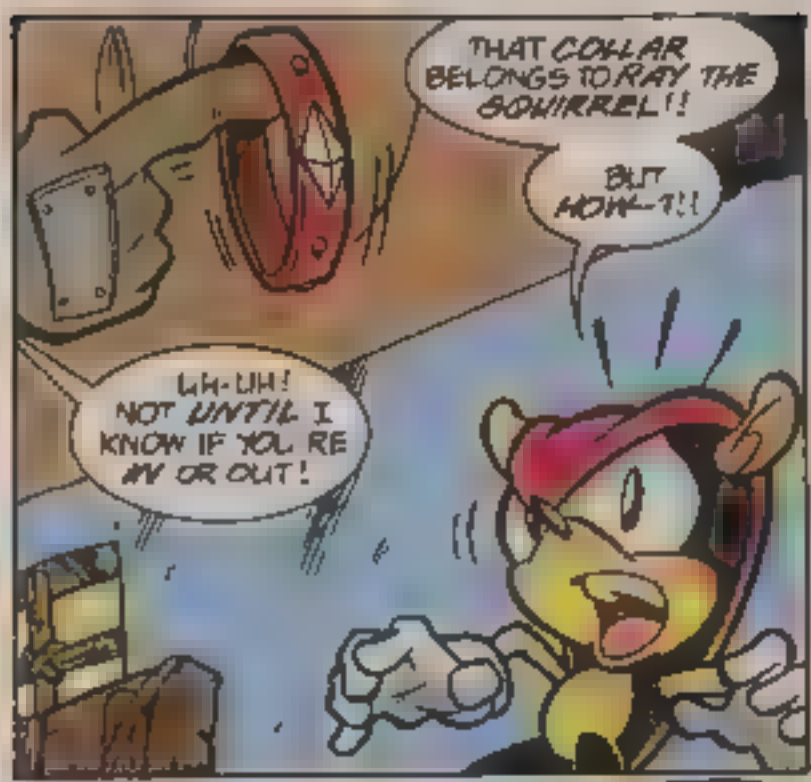
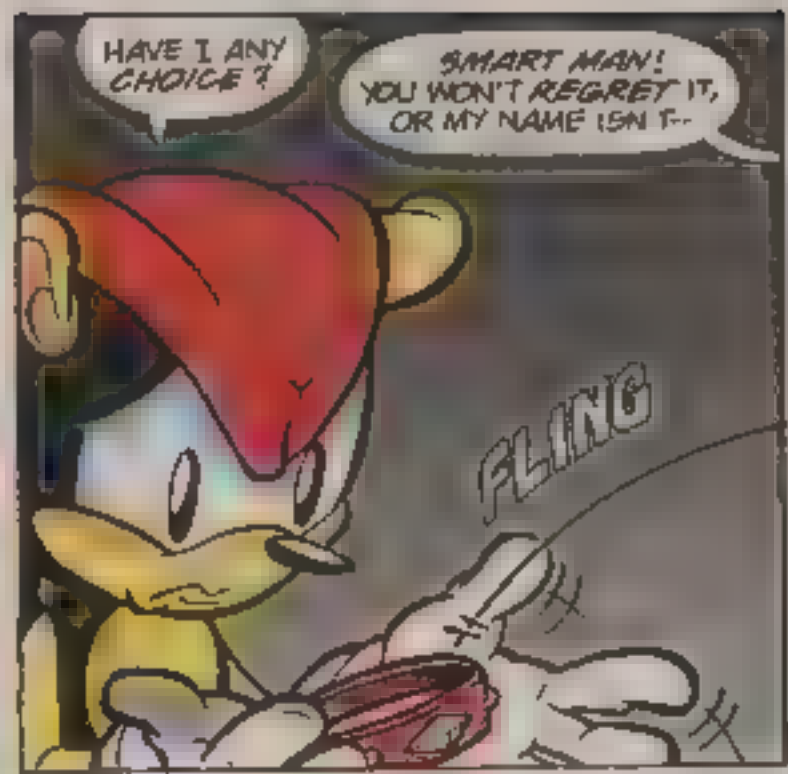
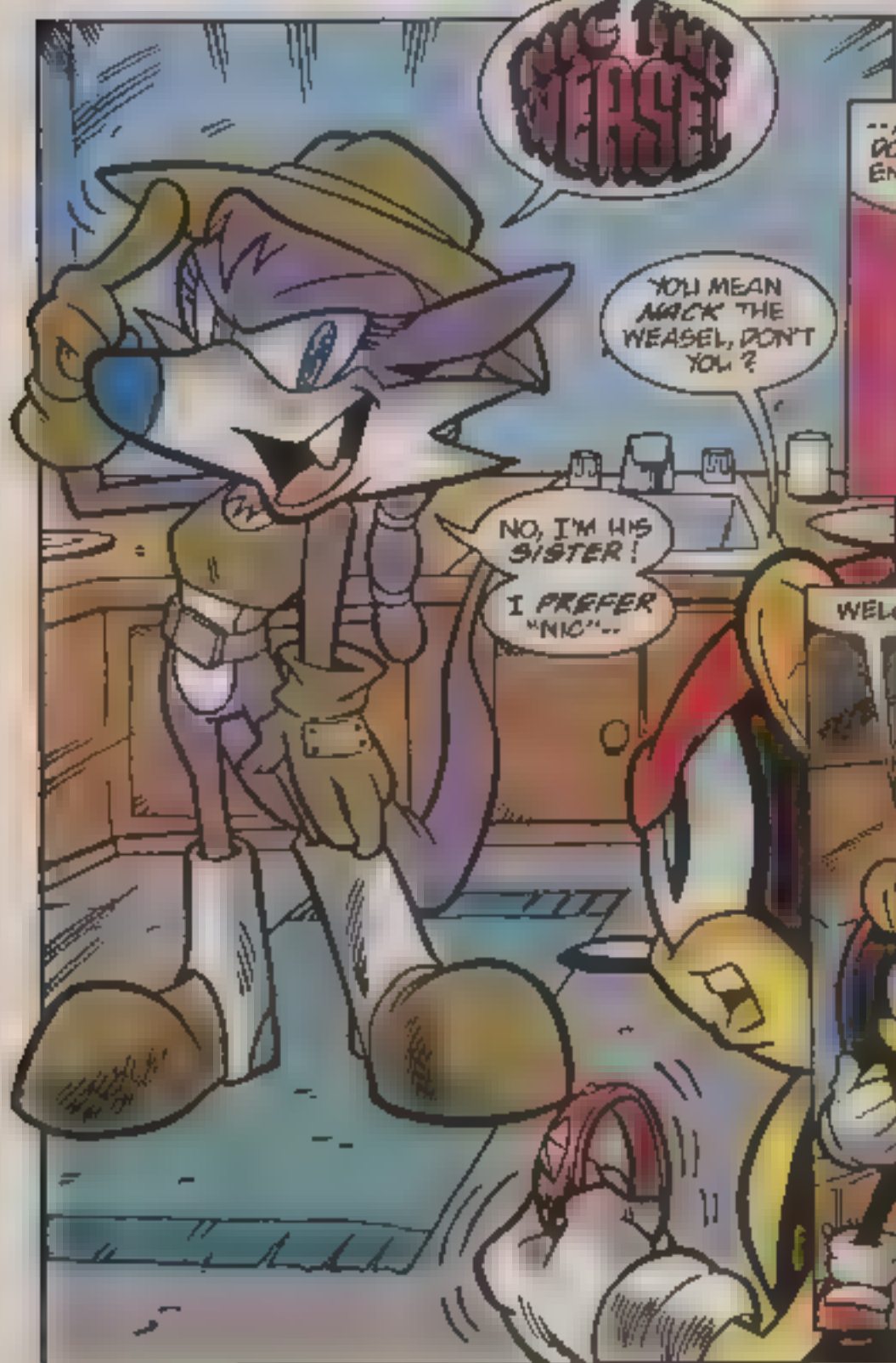
LETTERER: VICKIE WILLIAMS
EDITOR: J F GABRIE





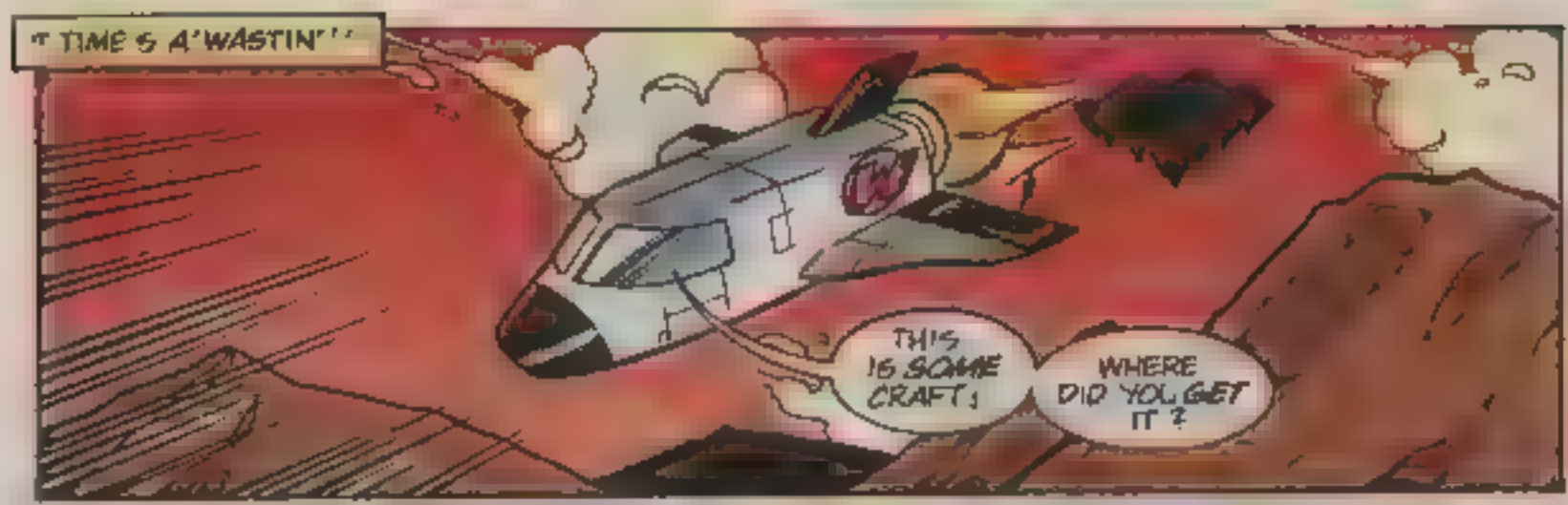

THAT COLLAR BELONGS TO RAY THE SQUIRREL!!
BUT HOW--?!!
UH-UH! NOT UNTIL I KNOW IF YOU RE IN OR OUT!

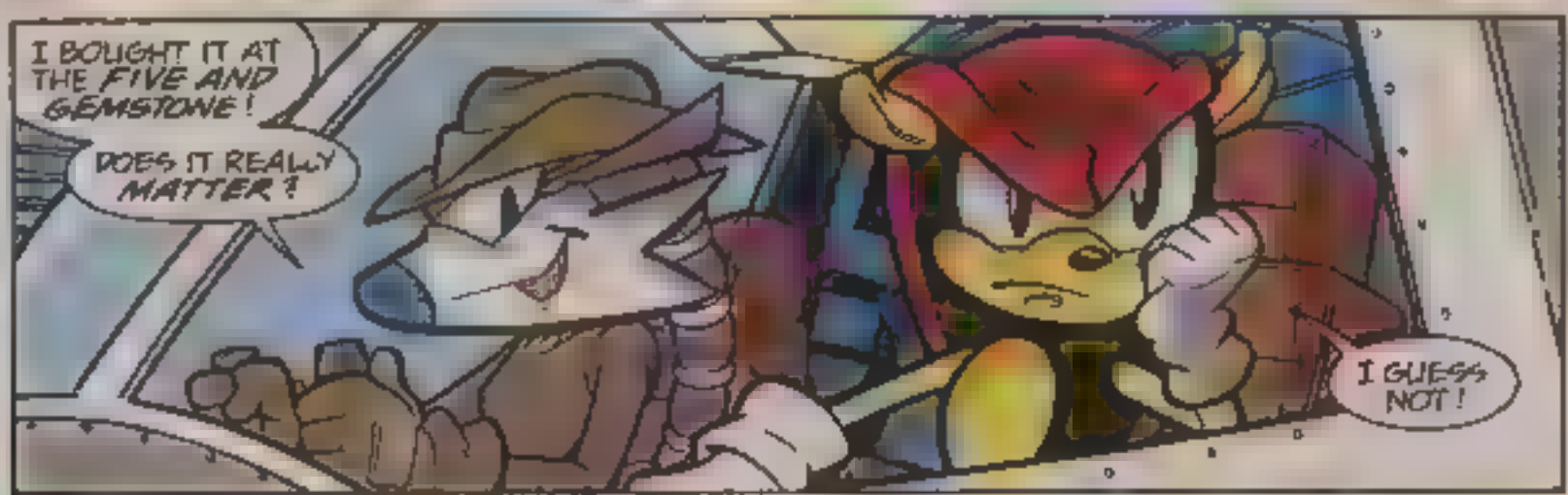

HAVE I ANY CHOICE?
SMART MAN! YOU WON'T REGRET IT, OR MY NAME ISN'T--
FLING

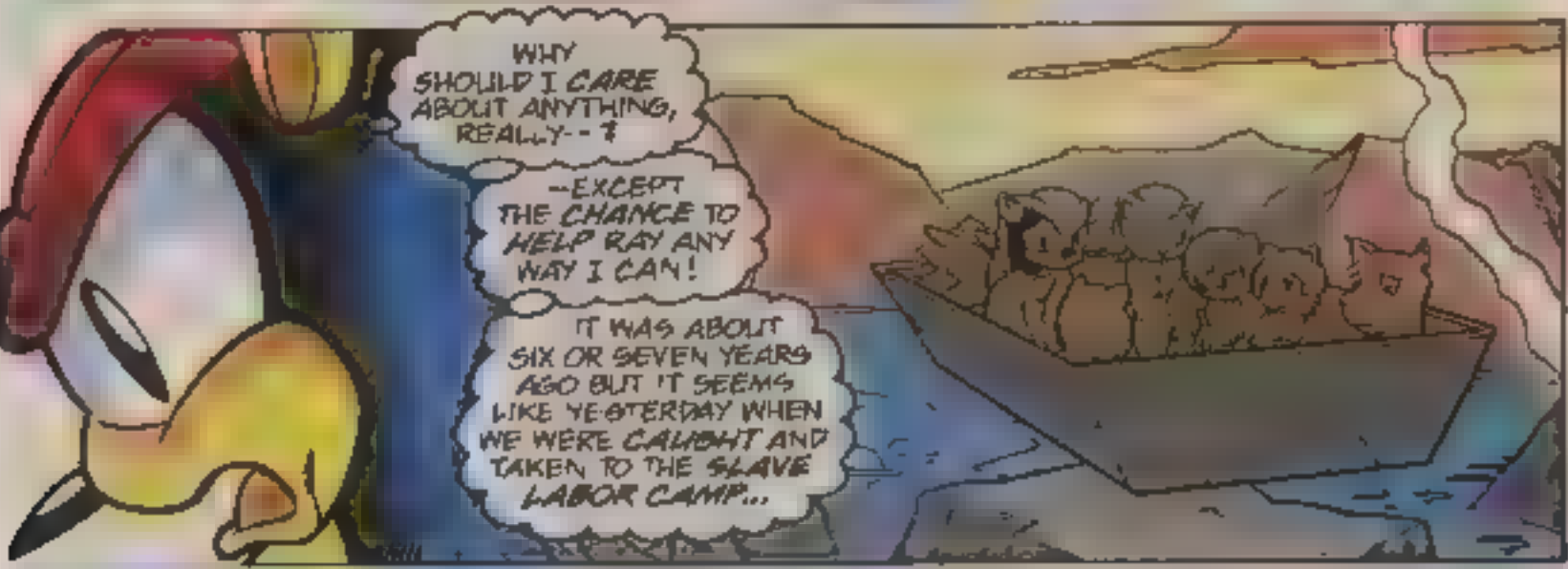

NICK THE WEASEL
YOU MEAN NICK THE WEASEL, DON'T YOU?
NO, I'M HIS SISTER!
I PREFER "NIC"--

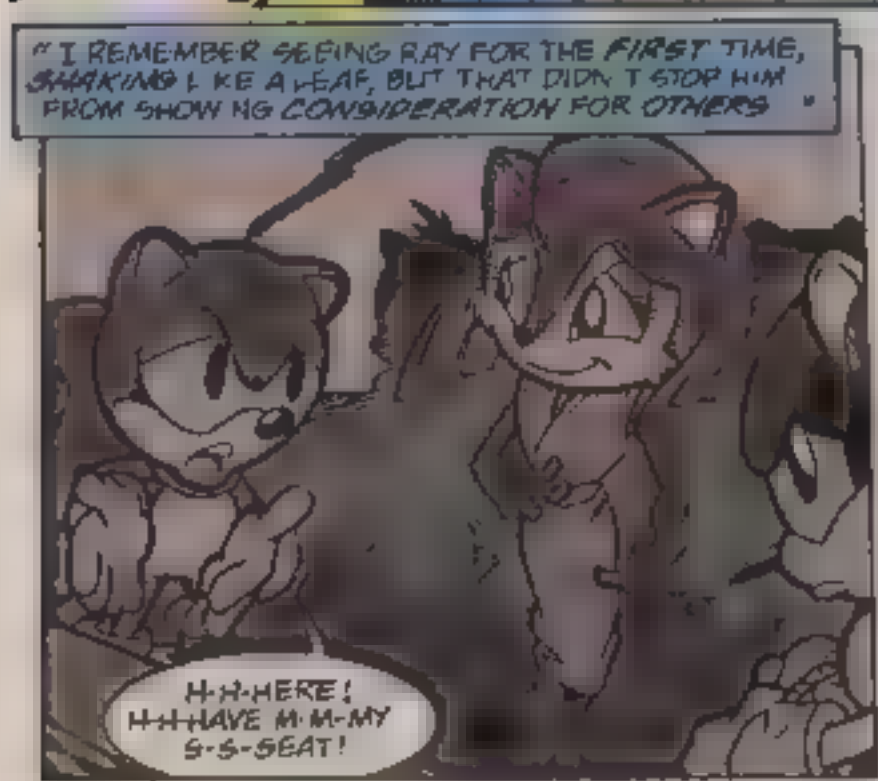
--AS "NICOLETTE" JUST DOESN'T SOUND TOUGH ENOUGH FOR A BOUNTY HUNTER!
WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

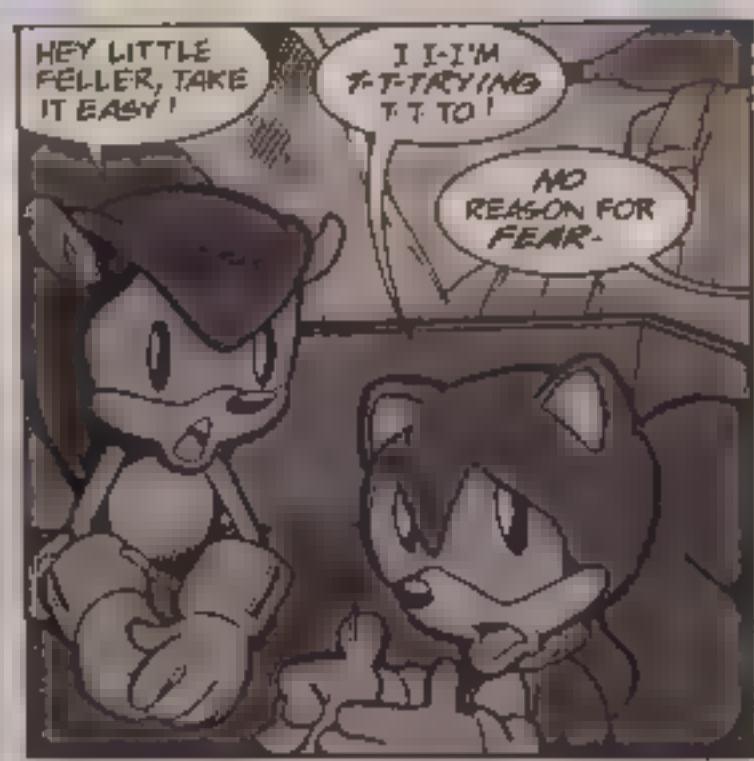
WELL I--
AND DON'T ASK WHAT'S A NICE GIRL LIKE YOU--!
C'MON!


"TIME'S A'WASTIN'!"
THIS IS SOME CRAFT!
WHERE DID YOU GET IT?


I BOUGHT IT AT THE FIVE AND GEMSTONE!
DOES IT REALLY MATTER?
I GUESS NOT!


WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT ANYTHING, REALLY--?
--EXCEPT THE CHANCE TO HELP RAY ANY WAY I CAN!
IT WAS ABOUT SIX OR SEVEN YEARS AGO BUT IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY WHEN WE WERE CAUGHT AND TAKEN TO THE SLAVE LABOR CAMP...


"I REMEMBER SEEING RAY FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHAKING LIKE A LEAF, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM FROM SHOWING CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS."
H-H-HERE! H-H-HAVE M-M-MY S-S-SEAT!


HEY LITTLE FELLER, TAKE IT EASY!
I I-I'M T-T-TRYING T-T-TO!
NO REASON FOR FEAR.

--'CAUSE THE HEDGEHOG IS HERE!

SORRY IF I'M NOT IMPRESSED--

--AS I DON'T HAVE THE FAINTEST IDEA WHO YOU ARE!

IT'S OKAY IF YOU'RE CLUELESS NOW, PAL--

--BUT YOU WON'T BE ONCE I GET JUICIN'!

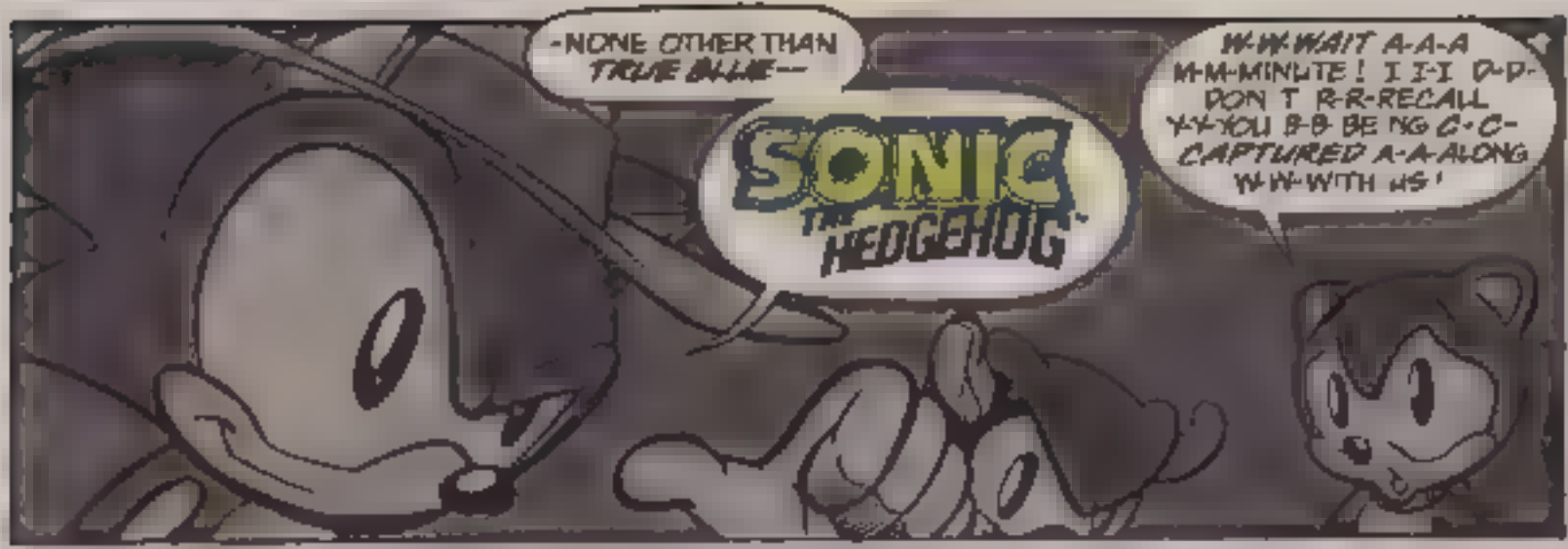
IS THAT A FACT?

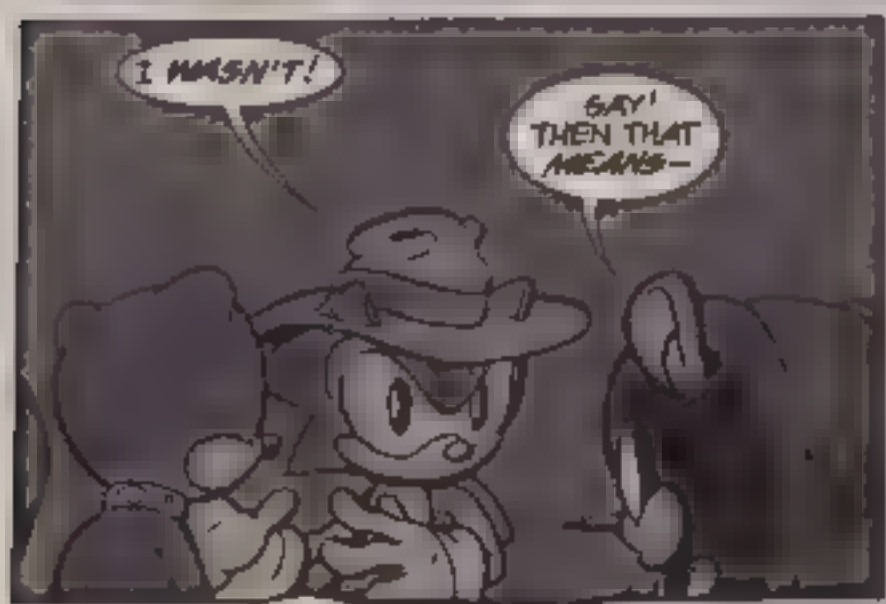
IF YOU'RE SO SPECIAL, HOW COME ROBOTNIK HASN'T TAKEN SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS WITH YOU LIKE HE DID WITH ME?

OL' ROBO-BUTT HAS PROBABLY FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT ME!

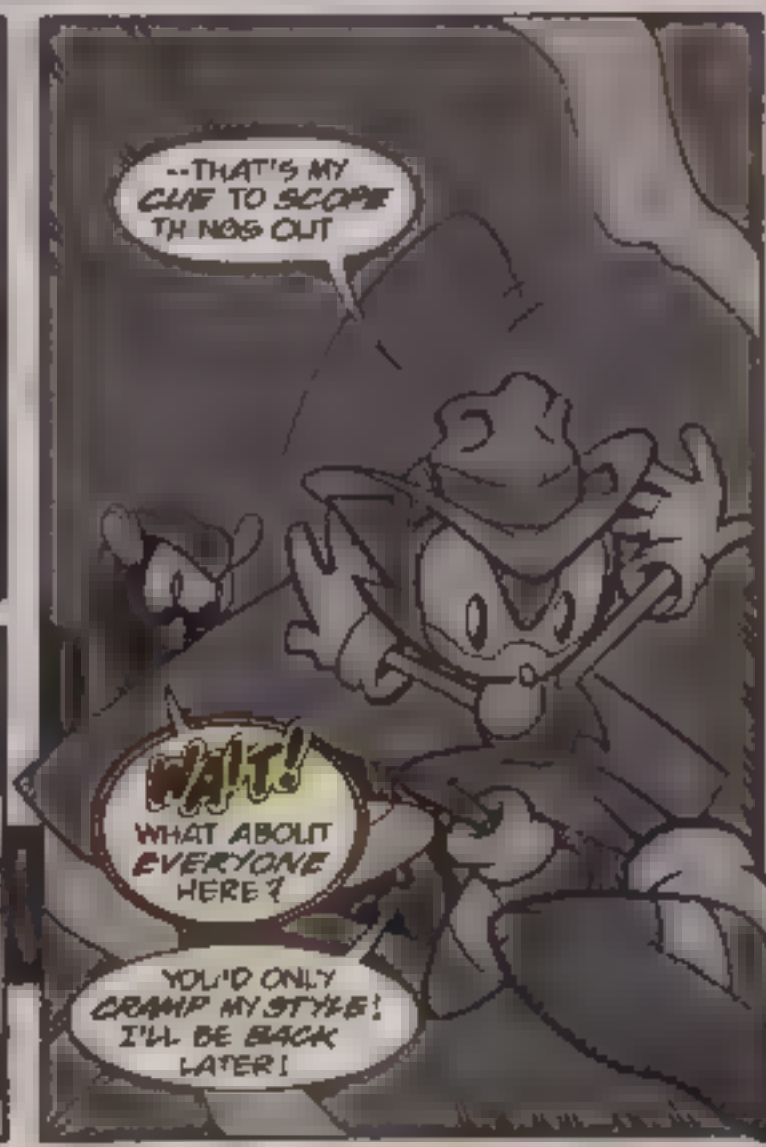
OUR ELDERS HAVE BEEN CARRYING THE FIGHT UNTIL RECENTLY!

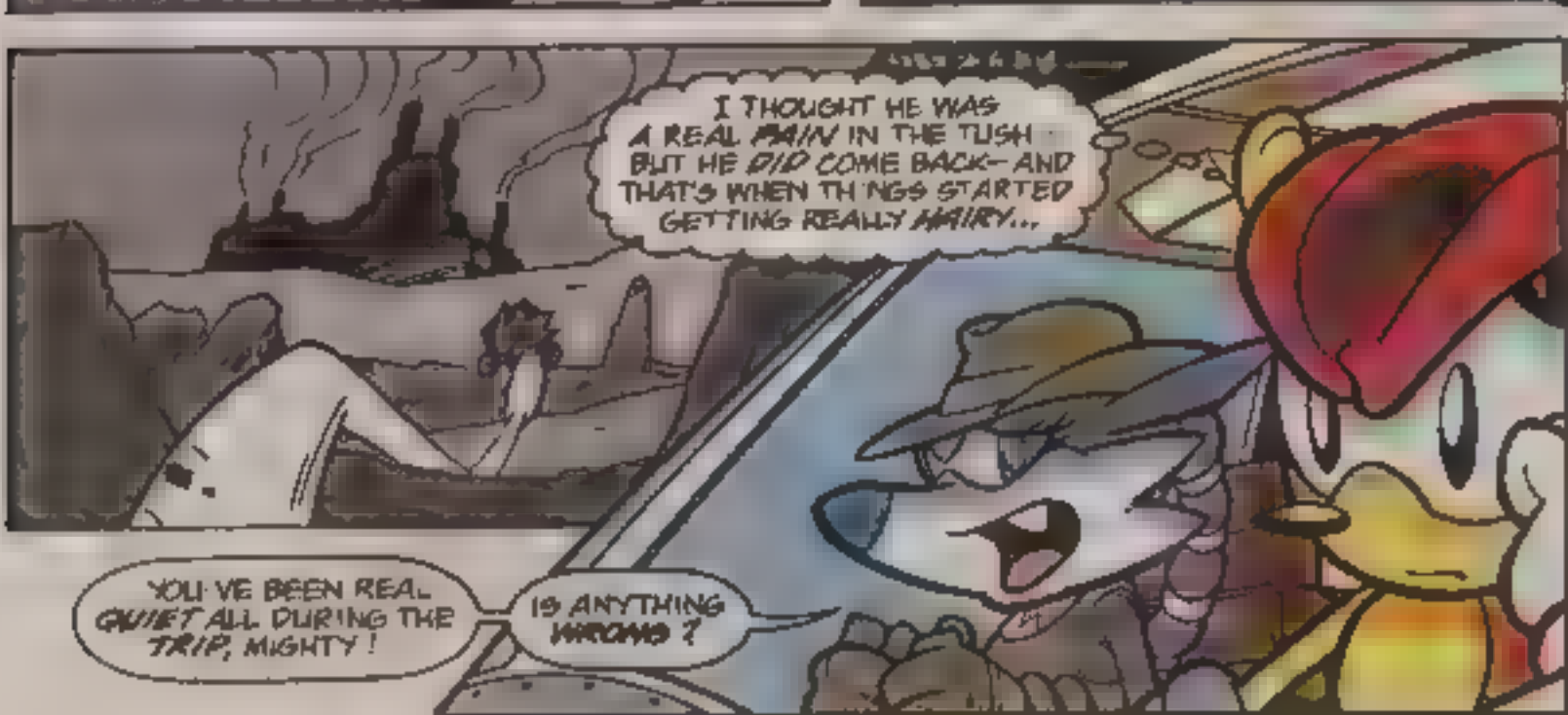
WITH THE LOSSES MOUNTING UP, WE FIGURED IT WAS TIME FOR THE [redacted] FIGHTERS TO DO THEIR PART, INCLUDING ME--


-NONE OTHER THAN TRUE BLUE--
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
W-W-WAIT A-A-A M-M-MINUTE! I I-I D-D-DON'T R-R-RECALL Y-Y-YOU B-B-BEING C-C-CAPTURED A-A-ALONG W-W-WITH US!

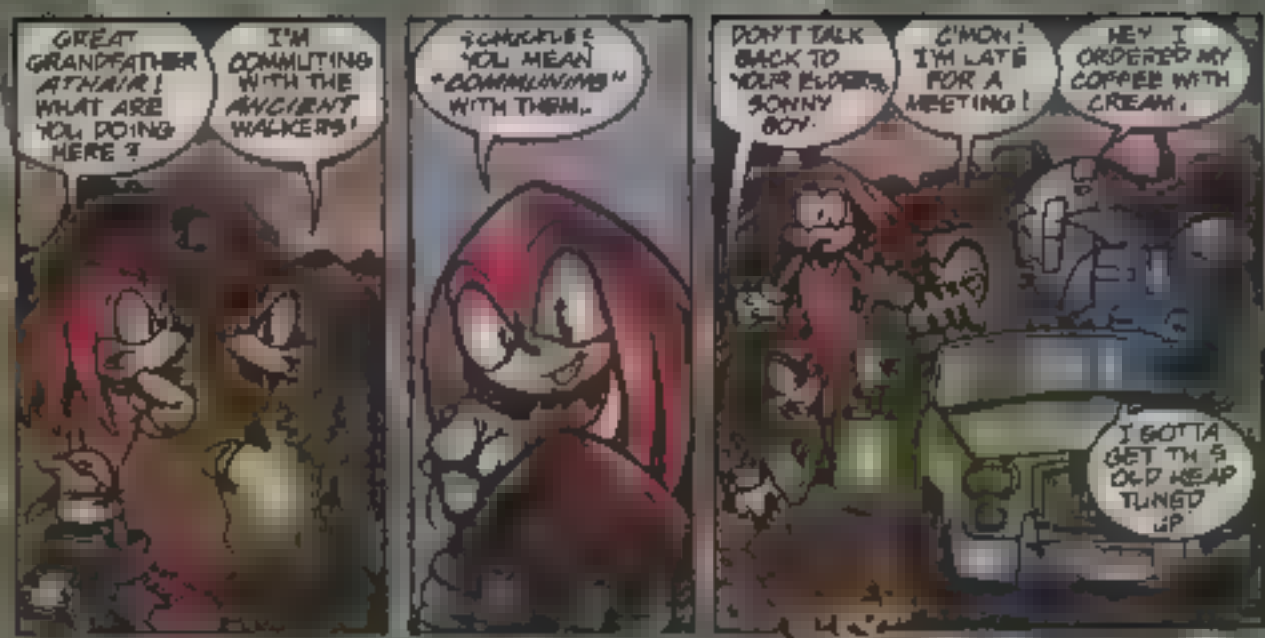

I WASN'T!
SAY! THEN THAT MEANS--

--YOU GOT IT!
I'M THE SECRET AGENT MAN BEING SENT BEHIND ENEMY LINES!
ONCE WE GET TO WHERE WE'RE GOING--


--THAT'S MY CUE TO SCOPE THINGS OUT
WAIT!
WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE HERE?
YOU'D ONLY CRAMP MY STYLE! I'LL BE BACK LATER!

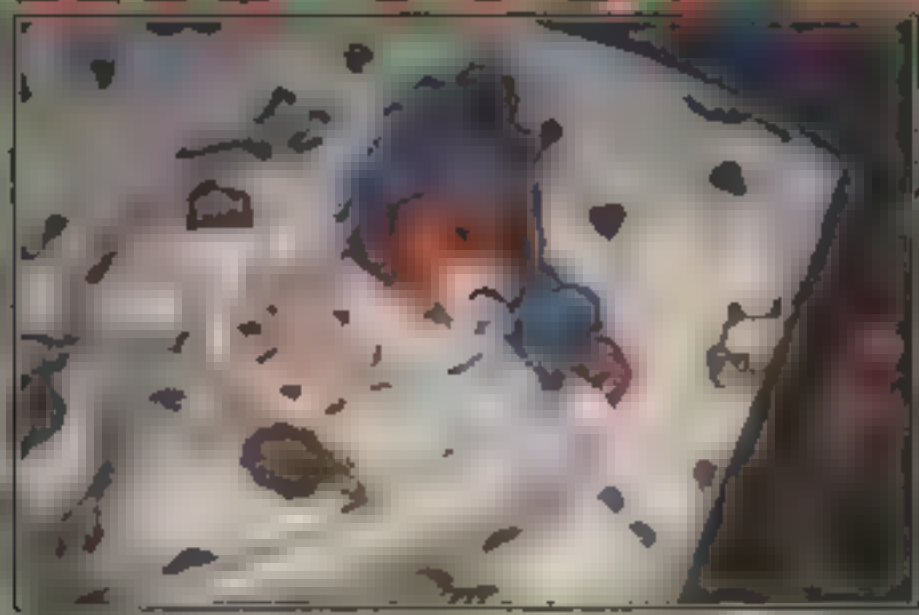

I THOUGHT HE WAS A REAL PAIN IN THE TUSH BUT HE DID COME BACK-AND THAT'S WHEN THINGS STARTED GETTING REALLY HAIRY...
YOU'VE BEEN REAL QUIET ALL DURING THE TRIP, MIGHTY!
IS ANYTHING WRONG?

NO! NOTHING AT ALL!
I WAS JUST THINKING!
FORTUNATELY, IT'S NOT YOUR BRAIN CELLS I NEED UP TO SPEED--
--ONLY YOUR BRAWN!
READY TO LIVE UP TO YOUR PART OF THE BARGAIN?
YEAH--BUT ANY SASN THINGS AREN'T ON THE UP-AND-UP--
--AND WE MIGHT HAVE TO RENEGOTIATE!
BOY, DOES THIS PLACE LOOK SPOOKIER THAN THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE!
THE NATIVES AREN'T FRIENDLY IN THESE PARTS!
THAT'S ANOTHER REASON YOU'RE WITH ME!
HOLD IT! SOMEONE IS COMING!
IT'S ONLY--
FIONA
YOU'RE--
--ALIVE?
NO THANKS TO YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS!
COME TO MAKE AMENDS, MIGHTY?
NEXT: LONG FORGOTTEN SECRETS AND OTHER BURIED TREASURES!



OFF PANEL by Gallagher, Manak & Harvo

THIS JUST IN!



On Tuesday, March 16, 1999 at precisely 2:00pm, Jacen Casey Galán was born. He weighed in at 8½ pounds and measured in at a whopping 21 inches. Let's give the proud (and now extremely tired) parents, Manny and Erika Galán, our heartiest congratulations. Guardian-style!

On another note: Saturday, June 5, 1999. Andrew Pepoy and Pam Eklund will be doing a Sonic & Knuckles signing at Graham Crackers Comics in the suberbs of Chicago, Il. If you're in the area, look out for them at 1271 Rickert Drive in Naperville from 11am to 1pm, at 1207 East Butterfield Road in Wheaton from 1:30pm to 3pm, and at 108 East Main Street in St. Charles from 4:30pm to 6:30pm.

J.F. GABRIE
Editor / Art Director

Catch you on the flip side!

Send letters to:
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG LETTERS #46
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Note: Due to the overwhelming amount of e-mail and snail mail, it is impossible for us to reply personally to each and every message. However your opinions are important to us and each message will be read. Also, due to space limitations, some correspondence may be edited. Thanks for understanding!

Re: KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA #22

Dear Knuckles

I just got issue #22 and I was just wondering, on page 22 there are three guys there. I know who the one in the front is, but who are the others? I would also like to know Knuckles relatives from Hawking to Edmund. And lastly, are Espio and Valbez related? Well that's it.

Ryan Meehan
Convent Station, NJ

The other two were the robot candidate, Benedict and the cyborg Dark Legionaire, Xenin. There was more on Knux's relatives in Knuckles #25 and there will be more to come. More on the Espio & Valbez connection in an upcoming story.

Konnichiwa Knuckles-sama!

Here is a major subject of question: Should Knuckles and Julie-Su be a couple? Personally, I say yes. Knux needs a good female companion at his side. A word to Vector concerning Julie-Su: Get over it! She's proven herself loyal already! Some people! On another subject: What color is Grandfather Spectre? Is he red like most other echidnas or is he black? I can't really tell. Oh, and I think Bunnie and Knuckles should have a crossover mini-series or special together. They are both my all-time favorite characters in both comics. I must congratulate you on the awesome story line! It is much more serious than the Sonic comics. Till next issue! Sayonara!

Saraberh
"Bunnie-chan" Collins
(age 14)
Garrison, TX

Uh, oh -- Saraberh is starting a discussion pool. Anybody care to agree or disagree with her? Spectre's red. The black are the shadows from his cowl. Check out Bunnie in a solo story in Sonic Super special #11.

Dear Knuckles,

How's it going, Rad Red? I'm doing pretty cool here! How are the Chaotix? Well, I hope they're doing good. What's the deal with Julie-Su? Is she your new best friend? I obviously don't like her. Plus, my theory is that they got rid of Charmy just to make room for her! Okay, back to business. Two questions: 1) So what's up with the Dingoes? Are they mad at the echidnas for something? 2) Is that woman Julie-Su's mother? If she is, she should talk Julie-Su into coming back! Stay cool, Raddy!

Toni Ferraro
Aston, PA

The Chaotix are having their own back-up features starting with this issue. 1) The Dingoes and Echidnas have never seen eye to eye on things for as long as they can remember. 2) More on the mysterious female echidna in a Julie-Su solo story in Sonic Super Special #11.

Dear Knuckles,

I loved Knuckles #21!!! The artwork was great and Dimitri has reappeared. I have a couple of questions though: 1) Where did Tobor and Kragok go? 2) Will he ever come back? 3) Would you marry Julie-Su in Knuckles #100? Or some other big number? 4) How did Dimitri stay alive before he became a cyborg? Oh and also: I LOVE the artwork of Spaz, Harvo and Pensers! They are soooooooo good which makes the covers (or anything else for that matter) look SUPER GROOVY!!! Keep up the good work.

walbx@erinet.com

Jim & Harvo give their thanks on the art compliment. 1&2) A mystery to be answered another time. 3) Time will tell. 4) The Dark Legion made him a cyborg to keep him alive. They almost didn't make it in time.

Well, that's it for this month. Thank you all for your comments. See you in thirty. And remember...

KEEP COOL!

Cover by Patrick Spaziante and Ken Penders. Colors and separations by Darrin Moore and Heroic Age.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

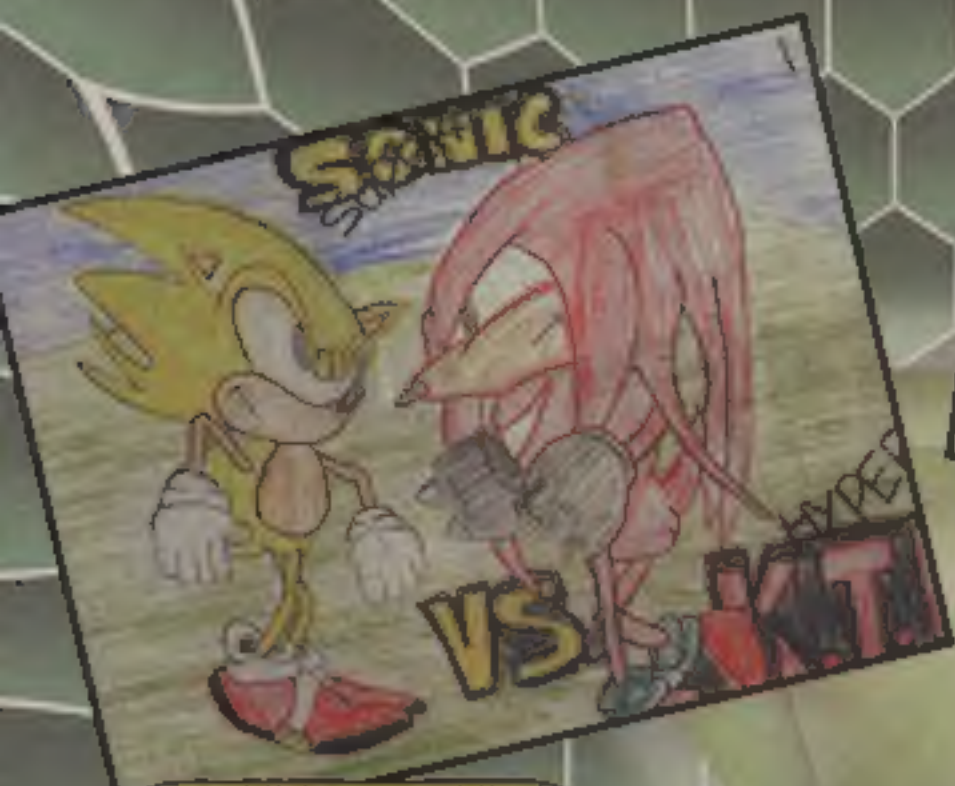
In one week: "The Truth Is Out There" When Robotnik's satellites link together to form a mega-sized space base, Sonic and the Freedom Fighters are set to investigate. That is, if they can get off the ground-- for just as they are about to leave, they receive a distress signal! Story by Karl Bollers with art by Steven Butler and Pam Eklund. Also: "Tales of the Great War, Pt. 2." By Ken Penders, Art Mawhinney and Jim Amash!

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #73 on sale late May 1999!

Next Month: He's faced some of the most dangerous villains the Floating Island has ever seen, but can even Knuckles surmount the hardest task he's ever faced: figuring out how to ask Julie-Su out on a date? It's the most heart-wrenching, gut-churning chapter yet in the life of everyone's favorite (lovesick) echidna! Story by Ken Penders with art by Chris Allan and Andrew Pepoy! Also, Part 2 of the Mighty solo story by Penders, Galán and Pepoy.

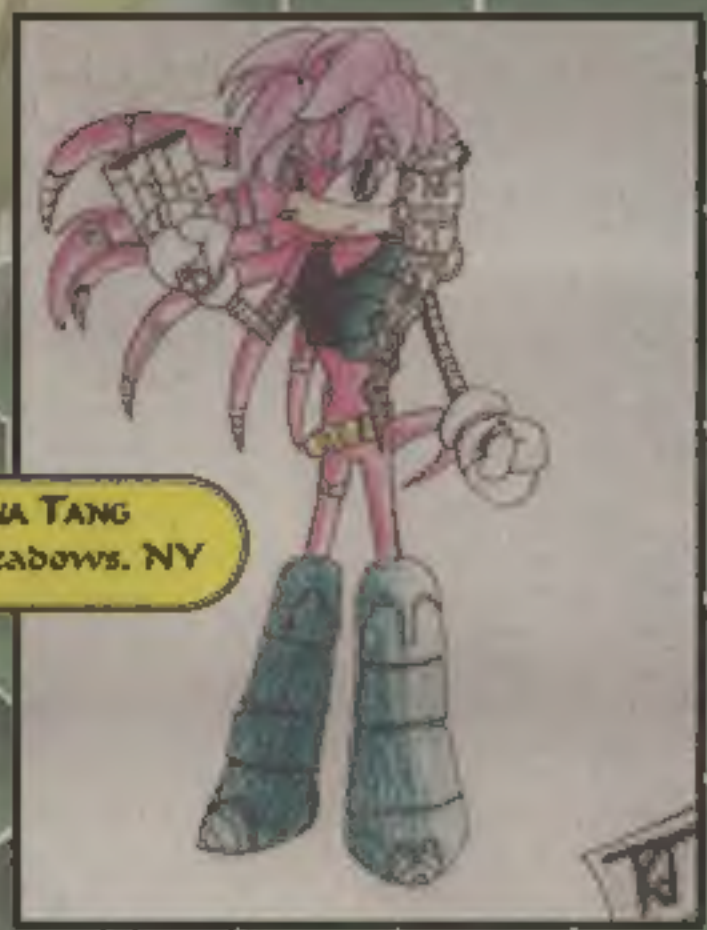
KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA #27 on sale early June 1999!

KNUX FAN ART



JOSH BRIDGES
(age 9)
U.S.Navy PSC
Yokosuka, JAPAN

MARK WATSON



KELINA TANG
Fresh Meadows, NY

NICOLE WEJOMAN
(age 11)
So. Milwaukee, WI

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